

## Autobiographical elements in Tale of Two cities:-

Charles Dickens is a representative novelist of his age and occupies a prominent place among the great English novelists. His novels hold up a mirror to the 19th Century England and, at the same time, presents some hard facts of his personal life. He has blended his personal experiences with the real world, his facts with fancy. His experiences provide a sober colouring to the real world and the real world provides meanings to his experiences. Like his other great novels, A Tale of Two Cities is a clear embodiment of his own passions and forebodings, the revolution which engulfs the characters, symbolises his own psychological revolution both as man and artist.

In fact, Dickens novels are the records of his life modified by the subjection to the tenets of art. His Oliver Twist represents his experiences of the lower life in London. 'Bleak House' is full of his knowledge of law courts and legal affairs. He records his school days in Nicholas Nickle and David Copperfield paints his childhood. But A Tale of Two Cities represents his mental crisis caused by his love affairs with Ellen Ternan, an actress in the drama The Frozen Deep. This love affair infusi-

ated his wife Catherine, who decided to divorce him. Thus his internal crisis was not less than the external crisis of the French Revolution. So through the depth of the French Revolution he has tried to reveal his own conflict.

The characters of 'A Tale of Two Cities' mirror in one way or the other the various aspects of Dickens life. Darny and Carton two important characters represent the bright and the dark side of Dickens. Darny stands for the light and optimistic aspects of his personality. This is evidently obvious when he goes to help ~~Carton~~ Gabelle in Paris and becomes a victim to the fury of Revolution. Besides, he belongs to the aristocratic class but likes to live with ordinary people. He gives up rather hates all those things that smell of aristocratic life. On the contrary, Carton is always pessimistic and symbolises the gloomy side of life. He always wishes to sacrifice his life for the happiness of his beloved. As a lover Darny can never touch the height of Carton. Through his character, Dickens expresses his own feelings for his beloved Carton fails to get Lucie as he could not get Ellen Ternan.

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Dickens describes in details the causes and sufferings during imprisonment. This is because of his father's imprisonment when he was just a child. The long imprisonment of Doctor Manette resembles that of his father. He tells us about the sufferings of the doctor who is imprisoned for 18 years only because he could dare to complain against the barbarity of Aristocracy. Darny also spends 15 months in jail. Several prisons like Newgate prison, The Tower in London, Bastille, La Force etc have been referred to. A critic opines that Dr. Manette is closer to Dickens than any other character in the novel when the doctor is in dejection, he is quite like Dickens who loses balance of his mind. Like him he is a man of great firmness of purpose, strength of resolution and vigour of action.

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When Dickens wrote this novel, his vision was dismal and tragic due to his personal circumstances. The Temper of his mind has been tuned through the melodramatic atmosphere of the novel. His personal revolution that he was suffering from at that time, has been focussed by Lucci's vague fears. Lucci's fear to the ghost of

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her father, an assassination, dreadful episodes of the French Revolution, the hanging of old Foulon — the storming of the Bastille, sharpening of knives and swords, the 'butchery', the blood shed etc. — all these give a peep into Dickens' inner self.

In fact, the writing of *A Tale of Two Cities* gives an opportunity to Dickens to escape the torments of his personal struggle. That is why he has created characters who belong to both the Public and private interests. He is also successful in establishing a harmony between historical and personal interests. Therefore his characters represent both the personal and impersonal elements. Thus, like other novels, '*A Tale of Two Cities*' also demonstrates Dickens' personal interests with all magnitudes:—

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